

MIND IN NATURE AND IN MAN

Articles by H. P. Blavatsky

KOSMIC MIND

DIALOGUE ON THE
MYSTERIES OF THE AFTER LIFE

A NOTE ON MEMORY

THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

THE MIND IN NATURE

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OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

- I *To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color;*
- II *The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and*
- III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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FOREWORD

H.P. BLAVATSKY was thoroughly aware of the devastating effect on human thought of the materialism bequeathed by the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, during which it provided the assumptions of all the branches of science, and she often found occasion to turn the findings of scientific investigation to her purpose of demonstrating the truths of occult philosophy. Her expositions were by no means limited to transmitting the ancient teaching, as the article, "Kosmic Mind," which was printed in *Lucifer* for April, 1890, will show. Here she takes fresh material from scientific literature, turning it into evidence which supports the philosophical propositions of the Secret Doctrine. She is able, also, to find in the forefront of scientific inquiry more than one witness to the principles she declares. Such scientists, always in the minority, are cited by her and dealt with in especially appreciative terms, since these were men whose intuitions were strong enough to break through the crust of skeptical denial, leading them to affirm the spiritual ideas which their researches had suggested.

In "Kosmic Mind" H.P.B. espouses the cause of Vitalism in biological controversy, drawing on various sources in scientific reports to show that studies of protoplasm and simple forms of life such as the *amoebas* are filled with observations contradicting mechanistic theories. Using this evidence as foundation, and with the statements of philosophical scientists to point the way for modern thought, she is able to reveal how ancient philosophy and symbolism reflected clear knowledge of these laws of the behavior of organisms.

The "Dialogue on the Mysteries of the After Life," which appeared in *Lucifer* for January, 1889, is probably the most illuminating discussion of the sevenfold constitution of man to be found in the periodical literature of Theosophy. It contains an analysis of the seven principles in terms of their function and illustrates again and again the sort of thinking the student is invited to pursue to gain a better understanding of man's nature. The meaning of *Manas-taijasi* is explained as nowhere else, and the self-determining power of the ego in respect to his future states of consciousness is made plain. The vexed question of "unmerited suffering" is gone into, and a clarifying distinction drawn between the immortal, reincarnating ego and the personal consciousness man possesses during his life on earth. Students will recognize here a more extended treatment of matters dealt with in *The Key to Theosophy* in the section on the states after death.

The eminent Russian physician, N. I. Pirogoff, is one of those quoted by H.P.B. in "Kosmic Mind," in *Lucifer* for April, 1890. Some months later H.P.B., as editor of *Lucifer*, decided to present to her readers a series of extracts from Dr. Pirogoff's *Memoirs*, which had been posthumously published in Russia. Accordingly, she translated and printed some ten installments of these extracts in *Lucifer*, starting in December, 1890. They were concluded in October, 1891 (after her death). She did this, she explained in an editor's note at the beginning, to add to the evidence presented in "Kosmic Mind," to show "how closely the views of a great man of science approximated to the occult teachings of Theosophy." Dr. Pirogoff's ideas included the conception of universal mind and that of "a distinct Vital Force, independent of any physical or chemical process." His diary makes interesting reading, since it does indeed confirm what H.P.B. says of his views, but the most valuable part of this contribution to *Lucifer*, today, remains H.P.B.'s few, scattered footnotes of comment and qualification. One of these, appended to a statement early in the final installment from Pirogoff's diary (*Lucifer* for October, 1891), is concerned with his opinion that human beings may have fully conscious perceptions which "are so evanescent as to disappear almost instantaneously from the circle of our conscious activity and are not retained by memory." This statement is directly challenged by H.P.B., as unacceptable to an Eastern Occultist, who would say, instead, that nothing that takes place can be lost. What follows in H.P.B.'s remarks on the subject of Memory

may stand alone as a short article and is included here as “A Note on Memory.”

“The Science of Life” aptly illustrates the close interdependence of the ethical and moral aspects of life with scientific and philosophical considerations, in Theosophic thought. In this article, which was published in *Lucifer* for November, 1887, H.P.B. translates from another Russian author—this time Tolstoi—to show how close the great novelist and reformer comes to the teachings of Theosophy, in a lecture given before a psychological society in Moscow. This is not the only time H.P.B. singled out Tolstoi for special attention. She referred to him in her *Lucifer* editorial, “The Cycle Moveth” (March, 1890), in another editorial, “Diagnoses and Palliatives” (*Lucifer*, July, 1890), and in an article devoted to his “Un-ecclesiastical Christianity” (*Lucifer*, September, 1890).

A unique quality of H.P.B. in her discussion of Western scholarship and archaeological speculations is her refusal to bow submissively to modern authorities who know nothing of either occult doctrines or the sources upon which they draw. This example is of vital importance to students of Theosophy, since the Theosophists of H.P.B.’s time as well as in later years have often been all too willing to compromise on their convictions in the presence of worldly authority. She found it necessary, again and again, to declare the priority of ancient philosophers, and the authenticity and reliability of their conclusions, even though garbed in a language modern scholars did not or would not understand. “The Mind in Nature,” which was printed in *Lucifer* for September, 1896, more than five years after H.P.B.’s death, is such a declaration.

KOSMIC MIND

Whatsoever quits the *Laya* (homogeneous) state, becomes active conscious life. Individual consciousness emanates from, and returns into Absolute consciousness, which is eternal MOTION. (*Esoteric Axioms.*)

Whatever that be which thinks, which understands, which wills, which acts, it is something celestial and divine, and upon that account must necessarily be eternal.

—CICERO

EDISON'S conception of matter was quoted in our March editorial article. The great American electrician is reported by Mr. G. Parsons Lathrop in *Harper's Magazine* as giving out his personal belief about the atoms being "possessed by a certain amount of intelligence," and shown indulging in other reveries of this kind. For this flight of fancy the February *Review of Reviews* takes the inventor of the phonograph to task and critically remarks that "Edison is much given to dreaming," his "scientific imagination" being constantly at work.

Would to goodness the men of science exercised their "scientific imagination" a little more and their dogmatic and cold negations a little less. Dreams differ. In that strange state of being which, as Byron has it, puts us in a position "with seal'd eyes to see," one often perceives more real facts than when awake. Imagination is, again, one of the strongest elements in human nature, or in the words of Dugald Stewart it "is the great spring of human activity, and the principal source of human improvement. . . . Destroy the faculty, and the condition of men will become as stationary as that of brutes." It is the best guide of our blind senses, without which the latter could never lead us beyond matter and its illusions. The greatest discoveries of modern science are due to the imaginative faculty of the discoverers. But when has anything new been postulated, when a theory clashing with and contradicting a comfortably settled predecessor put forth, without orthodox science first sitting on it, and trying to crush it out of

existence? Harvey was also regarded at first as a “dreamer” and a madman to boot. Finally, the whole of modern science is formed of “working hypotheses,” the fruits of “scientific imagination” as Mr. Tyndall felicitously called it.

Is it then, because consciousness in every universal atom and the possibility of a complete control over the cells and atoms of his body by man, have not been honored so far with the *imprimatur* of the Popes of exact science, that the idea is to be dismissed as a dream? Occultism gives the same teaching. Occultism tells us that every atom, like the monad of Leibnitz, is a little universe in itself; and that every organ and cell in the human body is endowed with a brain of its own, with memory, therefore, experience and discriminative powers. The idea of Universal Life composed of individual atomic lives is one of the oldest teachings of esoteric philosophy, and the very modern hypothesis of modern science, that of *crystalline life*, is the first ray from the ancient luminary of knowledge that has reached our scholars. If plants can be shown to have nerves and sensations and instinct (but another word for consciousness), why not allow the same in the cells of the human body? Science divides matter into organic and inorganic bodies, only because it rejects the idea of *absolute life* and a life-principle as an entity: otherwise it would be the first to see that *absolute life* cannot produce even a geometrical point, or an atom inorganic in its essence. But Occultism, you see, “teaches mysteries” they say; and mystery is *the negation of common sense*, just as again metaphysics is but a kind of poetry, according to Mr. Tyndall. There is no such thing for science as mystery; and therefore, as a Life-Principle is, and must remain for the intellects of our civilized races for ever a mystery *on physical lines*—they who deal in this question have to be of necessity either fools or knaves.

Dixit. Nevertheless, we may repeat with a French preacher: “mystery is the fatality of science.” Official science is surrounded on every side and hedged in by unapproachable, for ever impenetrable mysteries. And why? Simply because physical science is self-doomed to a squirrel-like progress around a wheel of matter limited by our five senses. And though it is as confessedly ignorant of the formation of matter, as of the generation of a simple cell; though it is as powerless to explain what is this, that, or the other, it will yet dogmatize and insist on what life, matter and the rest are not. It comes to this: the words of Father Felix addressed fifty

years ago to the French academicians have nearly become immortal as a truism. "Gentlemen," he said, "you throw into our teeth the reproach that we teach mysteries. But imagine whatever science you will; follow the magnificent sweep of its deductions. . . . and when you arrive at its parent source you come face to face with the unknown!"

Now to lay at rest once for all in the minds of Theosophists this vexed question, we intend to prove that modern science, owing to physiology, is itself on the eve of discovering that consciousness is universal—thus justifying Edison's "dreams." But before we do this, we mean also to show that though many a man of science is soaked through and through with such belief, very few are brave enough to openly admit it, as the late Dr. Pirogoff of St. Petersburg has done in his posthumous *Memoirs*. Indeed that great surgeon and pathologist raised by their publication quite a howl of indignation among his colleagues. How then? the public asked: He, Dr. Pirogoff, whom we regarded as almost the embodiment of European learning, believing in the superstitions of crazy alchemists? He, who in the words of a contemporary:—

was the very incarnation of exact science and methods of thought; who had dissected hundreds and thousands of human organs, making himself as acquainted with all the mysteries of surgery and anatomy as we are with our familiar furniture; the savant for whom physiology had no secrets and who, above all men, was one to whom Voltaire might have ironically asked whether he had not found immortal soul between the bladder and the blind gut,—that same Pirogoff is found after his death devoting whole chapters in his literary Will to the scientific demonstration. . . . *Novoye Vremya* of 1887.

—Of what? Why, of the existence in every organism of a distinct "VITAL FORCE" independent of any physical or chemical process. Like Liebig he accepted the derided and tabooed homogeneity of nature—a Life Principle—that persecuted and hapless teleology, or the science of the final causes of things, which is as philosophical as it is *unscientific*, if we have to believe imperial and royal academies. His unpardonable sin in the eyes of dogmatic modern science, however, was this: The great anatomist and surgeon, had the "hardihood" to declare in his *Memoirs*, that:—

We have no cause to reject the possibility of the existence of organisms endowed with such properties that would make of them—the direct embodiment of the universal mind—a perfec-

tion inaccessible to our own (human) mind. . . . Because, we have no right to maintain that man is the last expression of the divine creative thought.

Such are the chief features of the heresy of one, who ranked high among the men of exact science of this age. His *Memoirs* show plainly that not only he believed in Universal Deity, divine Ideation, or the Hermetic "Thought divine," and a Vital Principle, but taught all this, and tried to demonstrate it scientifically. Thus he argues that Universal Mind needs no physico-chemical, or mechanical brain as an organ of transmission. He even goes so far as to admit it in these suggestive words :—

Our reason must accept *in all necessity* an infinite and eternal Mind which rules and governs the ocean of life. . . . *Thought and creative ideation, in full agreement with the laws of unity and causation, manifest themselves plainly enough in universal life without the participation of brain-slush.* . . . Directing the forces and elements toward the formation of organisms, this *organizing life-principle* becomes *self-sentient, self-conscious, racial or individual*. Substance, ruled *and directed by the life-principle*, is organised *according to a general defined plan* into certain types. . . .

He explains this belief by confessing that never, during his long life so full of study, observation, and experiments, could he—

acquire the conviction, that our brain could be the only organ of thought in the whole universe; that everything in this world, save *that* organ, should be unconditioned and senseless, and that human thought alone should impart to the universe a meaning and a reasonable harmony in its integrity.

And he adds *à propos* of Moleschott's materialism :—

Howsoever much fish and peas I may eat, never shall I consent to give away my *Ego* into durance vile of a product casully extracted by modern *alchemy* from the urine. If, in our conceptions of the Universe it be our fate to fall into illusions, then my "illusion" has, at least, the advantage of being very consoling. For, it shows to me an intelligent Universe and the activity of Forces working in it harmoniously and intelligently; and that my "I" is not the product of chemical and histological elements but *an embodiment of a common universal Mind*. The latter, I sense and represent to myself as acting in free will and consciousness in accordance with the same laws which are traced for the guidance of my own mind, but only exempt from that restraint which trammels our human conscious individuality.

For, as remarks elsewhere this great and philosophic man of Science:—

The limitless and the eternal, is not only a postulate of our mind and reason, but also a gigantic fact, in itself. What would become of our ethical or moral principle were not the everlasting and integral truth to serve it as a foundation!

The above selections translated *verbatim* from the confessions of one who was during his long life a star of the first magnitude in the fields of pathology and surgery, show him imbued and soaked through with the philosophy of a reasoned and scientific mysticism. In reading the *Memoirs* of that man of scientific fame, we feel proud of finding him accepting, almost wholesale, the fundamental doctrines and beliefs of Theosophy. With such an exceptionally scientific mind in the ranks of mystics, the idiotic grins, the cheap satires and flings at our great Philosophy by some European and American “Freethinkers,” become almost a compliment. More than ever do they appear to us like the frightened discordant cry of the night-owl hurrying to hide in its dark ruins before the light of the morning Sun.

The progress of physiology itself, as we have just said, is a sure warrant that the dawn of that day when a full recognition of a universally diffused mind will be an accomplished fact, is not far off. It is *only* a question of time.

For, notwithstanding the boast of physiology, that the aim of its researches is only the summing up of every vital function in order to bring them into a definite order by showing their mutual relations to, and connection with, the laws of physics and chemistry, hence, in their final form with mechanical laws—we fear there is a good deal of contradiction between the confessed object and the speculations of some of the best of our modern physiologists. While few of them would dare to return as openly as did Dr. Pirogoff to the “exploded superstition” of *vitalism* and the severely exiled life-principle, the *principium vitæ* of Paracelsus—yet physiology stands sorely perplexed in the face of its ablest representatives before certain facts. Unfortunately for us, this age of ours is not conducive to the development of moral courage. The time for most to act on the noble idea of “*principia non homines*,” has not yet come. And yet there are exceptions to the general rule, and physiology—whose destiny it is to become the hand-maiden of Occult truths—has not let the latter remain without their witnesses. There are those who

are already stoutly protesting against certain hitherto favorite propositions. For instance, some physiologists are already denying that it is the forces and substances of so-called "inanimate" nature, which are acting exclusively in living beings. For, as they well argue:—

The fact that we reject the interference of other forces in living things, *depends entirely on the limitations of our senses*. We use, indeed, the same organs for our observations of both animate and inanimate nature; and these organs can receive manifestations of only a limited realm of motion. Vibrations passed along the fibres of our optic nerves to the brain reach our perceptions through our consciousness as sensations of light and color; vibrations affecting our consciousness through our auditory organs strike us as sounds; all our feelings, through whichever of our senses, are due to nothing but motions.

Such are the teachings of physical Science, and such were in their roughest outlines those of Occultism, æons and millenniums back. The difference, however, and most vital distinction between the two teachings, is this: official science sees in motion simply a blind, unreasoning force or law; Occultism, tracing motion to its origin, identifies it with the Universal Deity, and calls this eternal ceaseless motion—the "Great Breath."¹

Nevertheless, however limited the conception of Modern Science about the said Force, still it is suggestive enough to have forced the following remark from a great Scientist, the present professor of physiology at the University of Basle,² who speaks like an Occultist.

It would be folly in us to expect to be ever able to discover, with the assistance only of our external senses, in animate nature that something which we are unable to find in the inanimate.

And forthwith the lecturer adds that man being endowed "in addition to his physical senses with an *inner sense*," a perception which gives him the possibility of observing the states and phenomena of his own consciousness, "he has to use *that* in dealing with animate nature"—a profession of faith verging suspiciously on the borders of Occultism. He denies, moreover, the assumption, that the states and phenomena of consciousness represent in substance the same manifestations of motion as in the external world, and bases his denial by the reminder that not all of such states and manifestations have necessarily a spatial extension. According to

¹ Vide "Secret Doctrine," vol. I, pp. 2 and 3.

² From a paper read by him some time ago at a public lecture.

him that only is connected with our conception of space which has reached our consciousness through sight, touch, and the muscular sense, while all the other senses, all the *effects*, tendencies, as all the interminable series of representations, have no extension in space but only in time.

Thus he asks :—

Where then is there room in this for a mechanical theory? Objectors might argue that this is so only in appearance, while in reality all these have a spatial extension. But such an argument would be entirely erroneous. Our sole reason for believing that objects perceived by the senses have such extension in the external world, rests on the idea that they seem to do so, as far as they can be watched and observed through the senses of sight and touch. With regard, however, to the realm of our *inner* senses even that supposed foundation loses its force and there is no ground for admitting it.

The winding up argument of the lecturer is most interesting to Theosophists. Says this physiologist of the modern school of Materialism :—

Thus, a deeper and more direct acquaintance with *our inner nature* unveils to us a world *entirely unlike the world represented to us by our external senses*, and reveals the most heterogeneous faculties, shows objects having nought to do with spatial extension, and phenomena absolutely disconnected with those that fall under mechanical laws.

Hitherto the opponents of vitalism and “life-principle,” as well as the followers of the mechanical theory of life, based their views on the supposed fact, that, as physiology was progressing forward, its students succeeded more and more in connecting its functions with the laws of *blind matter*. All those manifestations that used to be attributed to a “mystical life-force,” they said, may be brought now under physical and chemical laws. And they were, and still are loudly clamoring for the recognition of the fact that it is only a question of time when it will be triumphantly demonstrated that the whole vital process, in its grand totality, represents nothing more mysterious than a very complicated phenomenon of motion, exclusively governed by the forces of inanimate nature.

But here we have a professor of physiology who asserts that the history of physiology proves, unfortunately for them, quite the contrary; and he pronounces these ominous words :—

I maintain that the more our experiments and observations are

exact and many-sided, the deeper we penetrate into facts, the more we try to fathom and speculate on the phenomena of life, the more we acquire the conviction, that even those phenomena that we had hoped to be already able to explain by physical and chemical laws, *are in reality unfathomable*. They are vastly more complicated, in fact; and as we stand at present, *they will not yield to any mechanical explanation*.

This is a terrible blow at the puffed-up bladder known as Materialism, which is as empty as it is dilated. A Judas in the camp of the apostles of negation—the “animalists”! But the Basle professor is no solitary exception, as we have just shown; and there are several physiologists who are of his way of thinking; indeed some of them going so far as to almost accept *free-will* and *consciousness*, in the simplest monadic protoplasms!

One discovery after the other tends in this direction. The works of some German physiologists are especially interesting with regard to cases of consciousness and positive discrimination—one is almost inclined to say *thought*—in the *Amæbas*. Now the *Amæbas* or animalculæ are, as all know, microscopical protoplasms—as the *Vampyrella Sirogyra* for instance, a most simple elementary cell, a protoplasmic drop, formless and almost structureless. And yet it shows in its behavior something for which zoologists, if they do not call it mind and power of reasoning, will have to find some other qualification, and coin a new term. For see what Cienkowsky³ says of it. Speaking of this microscopical, bare, reddish cell he describes the way in which it hunts for and finds among a number of other aquatic plants one called *Spirogyra*, rejecting every other food. Examining its peregrinations under a powerful microscope, he found it when moved by hunger, first projecting its *pseudopodiæ* (false feet) by the help of which it crawls. Then it commences moving about until among a great variety of plants it comes across a *Spirogyra*, after which it proceeds toward the cellulated portion of one of the cells of the latter, and placing itself on it, it bursts the tissue, sucks the contents of one cell and then passes on to another, repeating the same process. This naturalist never saw it take any other food, and it never touched any of the numerous plants placed by Cienkowsky in its way. Mentioning another *Amæba*—the *Colpaddella Pugnax*—he says that he found it showing the same predilection for the *Chlamydomonas* on which it feeds exclusively; “having

³ L. Cienkowsky. See his work *Beitraege zur Kenntniss der Monaden*, Archiv f. mikroskop, Anatomie.

made a puncture in the body of the *Chlamydomonas* it sucks its chlorophyl and then goes away," he writes, adding these significant words: "The way of acting of these monads during their search for and reception of food, is so amazing that one is almost inclined to see in them *consciously acting beings!*"

Not less suggestive are the observations of Th. W. Engelmann (*Beiträge zur Physiologie des Protoplasma*), on the *Arcella*, another unicellular organism only a trifle more complex than the *Vampyrella*. He shows them in a drop of water under a microscope on a piece of glass, lying so to speak, on their backs, *i.e.*, on their convex side, so that the *pseudopodiæ*, projected from the edge of the shell, find no hold in space and leave the *Amœba* helpless. Under these circumstances the following curious fact is observed. Under the very edge of one of the sides of the protoplasm gas-bubbles begin immediately to form, which, making that side lighter, allow it to be raised, bringing at the same time the opposite side of the creature into contact with the glass, thus furnishing its *pseudo* or false feet means to get hold of the surface and thereby turning over its body to raise itself on all its *pseudopodiæ*. After this, the *Amœba* proceeds to suck back into itself the gas-bubbles and begins to move. If a like drop of water is placed on the lower extremity of the glass, then, following the law of gravity the *Amœbæ* will find themselves at first at the lower end of the drop of water. Failing to find there a point of support, they proceed to generate large bubbles of gas, when, becoming lighter than the water, they are raised up to the surface of the drop.

In the words of Engelmann :—

If having reached the surface of the glass they find no more support for their feet than before, forthwith one sees the gas-globules diminishing on one side and increasing in size and number on the other, or both, until the creatures touch with the edge of their shell the surface of the glass, and are enabled to turn over. No sooner is this done than the gas-globules disappear and the *Arcellæ* begin crawling. Detach them carefully by means of a fine needle from the surface of the glass and thus bring them down once more to the lower surface of the drop of water; and forthwith they will repeat the same process, varying its details according to necessity and devising new means to reach their desired aim. Try as much as you will to place them in uncomfortable positions, and they find means to extricate themselves from them, each time, by one device or the other; and no sooner have they succeeded than the gas-bubbles disappear! It is im-

possible not to admit that such facts as these *point to the presence of some PSYCHIC process in the protoplasm.*⁴

Among hundreds of accusations against Asiatic nations of degrading *superstitions*, based on “crass ignorance,” there exists no more serious denunciation than that which accuses and convicts them of personifying and *even deifying* the chief organs *of, and in,* the human body. Indeed, do not we hear these “benighted fools” of Hindus speaking of the small-pox as a goddess—thus personifying the microbes of the variolic virus? Do we not read about *Tantrikas*, a sect of mystics, giving proper names to nerves, cells and arteries, connecting and identifying various parts of the body with deities, endowing functions and physiological processes with intelligence, and what not? The vertebræ, fibers, ganglia, the cord, etc., of the spinal column; the heart, its four chambers, auricle and ventricle, valves and the rest; stomach, liver, lungs and spleen, everything has its special deific name, is believed *to act consciously* and to act under the potent will of the Yogi, whose head and heart are the seats of Brahma and the various parts of whose body are all the pleasure grounds of this or another deity!

This is indeed *ignorance*. Especially when we think that the said organs, and the whole body of man are composed of cells, and these cells are now being recognised as individual organisms and—*quien sabe*—will come perhaps to be recognized some day as *an independent race of thinkers* inhabiting the globe, called man! It really looks like it. For was it not hitherto believed that all the phenomena of assimilation and sucking in of food by the intestinal canal, could be explained by the laws of diffusion and endosmosis? And now, alas, physiologists have come to learn that the action of the intestinal canal during the act of absorbing, is not identical with the action of the non-living membrane in the dialyser. It is now well demonstrated that—

this wall is covered with epithelium cells, each of which is an organism *per se*, a living being, and with very complex functions. We know further, that such a cell assimilates food—by means of active contractions of its protoplasmic body—in a manner as mysterious as that which we notice in the independent *Amœba* and animalcules. We can observe on the intestinal epithelium of the cold-blooded animals how these cells project shoots—*pseudopodiae*—out of their contractive, bare protoplasmic bodies—which *pseudopodiae*, or false feet, fish out of the food

⁴ Loc. cit, Pflüger's Archiv. Bd. II, S. 387.

drops of fat, suck them into their protoplasm and send it further, toward the lymph-duct. . . . The lymphatic cells issuing from the nests of the adipose tissue, and squeezing themselves through the epithelium cells up to the surface of the intestines, absorb therein the drops of fat and loaded with their prey, travel homeward to the lymphatic canals. So long as this active work of the cells remained unknown to us, the fact that while the globules of fat penetrated through the walls of the intestines into lymphatic channels, the smallest of pigmental grains introduced into the intestines did not do so,—remained unexplained. But to-day we know, that this faculty of selecting their special food—of assimilating the useful and rejecting the useless and the harmful—is common to all the unicellular organisms.⁵

And the lecturer queries, why, if this *discrimination* in the selection of food exists in the simplest and most elementary of the cells, in the formless and structureless protoplasmic *drops*—why it should not exist also in the epithelium cells of our intestinal canal. Indeed, if the *Vampyrella* recognises its much beloved *Spirogyra*, among hundreds of other plants as shown above, why should not the epithelium cell, *sense*, *choose* and *select* its favorite drop of fat from a pigmental grain? But we will be told that “sensing, choosing, and selecting” pertain only to reasoning beings, at least to the *instinct* of more structural animals than is the protoplasmic cell outside or inside man. Agreed; but as we translate from the lecture of a learned physiologist and the works of other learned naturalists, we can only say, that these learned gentlemen must know what they are talking about; though they are probably ignorant of the fact that their *scientific* prose is but one degree removed from the *ignorant*, *superstitious*, but rather poetical “twaddle” of the Hindu Yogis and Tantrikas.

Anyhow, our professor of physiology falls foul of the materialistic theories of diffusion and endosmosis. Armed with the facts of the evident discrimination and *a mind* in the cells, he demonstrates by numerous instances the fallacy of trying to explain certain physiological processes by mechanical theories; such for instance as the passing of sugar from the liver (where it is transformed into glucose) into the blood. Physiologists find great difficulty in explaining this process, and *regard it as an impossibility to bring it under the endosmotic laws*. In all probability the lymphatic cells play just as active a part during the absorption of

⁵ From the paper read by the Professor of physiology at the University of Basle, previously quoted.

alimentary substances dissolved in water, as the peptics do, a process well demonstrated by F. Hofmeister.⁶ Generally speaking, poor convenient endosmose is dethroned and exiled from among the active functionaries of the human body as a useless sinecurist. It has lost its voice in the matter of glands and other agents of secretion, in the action of which the same epithelium cells have replaced it. The mysterious faculties of selection, of extracting from the blood one kind of substance and rejecting another, of transforming the former by means of decomposition and synthesis, of directing some of the products into passages which will throw them out of the body and redirecting others into lymphatic and blood vessels—such is the work of the cells. “*It is evident that in all this there is not the slightest hint at diffusion or endosmose,*” says the Basle physiologist. “*It becomes entirely useless to try and explain these phenomena by chemical laws.*”

But perhaps physiology is luckier in some other department? Failing in the laws of alimentation, it may have found some consolation for its mechanical theories in the question of the activity of muscles and nerves, which it sought to explain by electric laws? Alas, save in a few fishes—in no other living organisms, least of all in the human body, could it find any possibility of pointing out electric currents as the chief ruling agency. Electrobiology on the lines of pure dynamic electricity has egregiously failed. Ignorant of “Fohat” no electrical currents suffice to explain to it either muscular or nervous activity!

But there is such a thing as the physiology of external sensations. Here we are no longer on *terra incognita*, and all such phenomena have already found purely *physical* explanations. No doubt, there is the phenomenon of sight, the eye with its optical apparatus, its camera obscura. But the fact of the sameness of the reproduction of things in the eye, according to the same laws of refraction as on the plate of a photographic machine, is *no vital phenomenon*. The same may be reproduced *on a dead eye*. The phenomenon of life consists *in the evolution and development of the eye itself*. How is this marvellous and complicated work produced? To this physiology replies, “We do not know”; for, toward the solution of this great problem—

⁶ *Untersuchungen ueber Resorption u. Assimilation der Naehrstoffe* (Archiv. f. Experimentalle Pathologie und Pharmakologie, Bd. XIX, 1885).

Physiology has not yet made one single step. True, we can follow the sequence of the stages of the development and formation of the eye, but *why* it is so and *what* is the causal connection, we have absolutely no idea. The second vital phenomenon of the eye is its accommodating activity. And here we are again face to face with the functions of nerves and muscles—our old insoluble riddles. The same may be said of all the organs of sense. The same also relates to other departments of physiology. We had hoped to explain the phenomena of the circulation of the blood by the laws of hydrostatics or hydrodynamics. Of course the blood moves in accordance with the hydrodynamical laws: but its relation to them remains utterly *passive*. As to the *active* functions of the heart and the muscles of its vessels, *no one, so far, has ever been able to explain them by physical laws.*

The underlined words in the concluding portion of the able Professor's lecture are worthy of an Occultist. Indeed, he seems to be repeating an aphorism from the "Elementary Instructions" of the esoteric physiology of *practical* Occultism:—

The riddle of life is found in the active functions of a living organism,⁷ the real perception of which activity we can get only through self-observation, and not owing to our external senses; by observations on our will, so far as it penetrates our consciousness, thus revealing itself to our inner sense. Therefore, when the same phenomenon acts only on our external senses, we recognize it no longer. We see everything that takes place around and near the phenomenon of motion, but the essence of that phenomenon we do not see at all, because we lack for it a special organ of receptivity. We can accept that esse in a mere hypothetical way, and do so, in fact, when we speak of "active functions." Thus does every physiologist, for he cannot go on without such hypothesis; and this is a first experiment of a psychological explanation of all vital phenomena. . . . And if it is demonstrated to us that we are unable with the help only of physics and chemistry to explain the phenomena of life, what may we expect from other adjuncts of physiology, from the sciences of morphology, anatomy, and histology? I maintain that these can never help us to unriddle the problem of any of the mysterious phenomena of life. For, after we have succeeded with the help of scalpel and microscope in dividing the organisms into their most elementary compounds, and reached the simplest of cells, it is just here that we find ourselves face to face with the greatest problem of all. The simplest monad, a microscopical point of protoplasm, form-

⁷ Life and activity are but two different names for the same idea, or, what is still more correct they are two words with which the men of science connect no definite idea whatever. Nevertheless, and perhaps just for that, they are obliged to use them, for they contain the point of contact between the most difficult problems over which, in fact, the greatest thinkers of the materialistic school have ever tripped.

less and structureless, exhibits yet all the essential vital functions, alimentation, growth, breeding, motion, feeling and sensuous perception, and even such functions which replace "consciousness"—the soul of the higher animals!

The problem—for Materialism—is a terrible one, indeed! Shall our cells, and infinitesimal monads in nature, do for us that which the arguments of the greatest Pantheistic philosophers have hitherto failed to do? Let us hope so. And if they do, then the "superstitious and ignorant" Eastern Yogis, and even their exoteric followers, will find themselves vindicated. For we hear from the same physiologist that—

A large number of poisons are prevented by the epithelium *cells* from penetrating into lymphatic spaces, though we know that they are easily decomposed in the abdominal and intestinal juices. More than this. Physiology is aware that by injecting these poisons directly into the blood, they will separate from, and reappear through the intestinal walls, and that in this process the *lymphatic cells* take a most active part.

If the reader turns to Webster's *Dictionary* he will find therein a curious explanation at the words "lymphatic" and "Lymph." Etymologists think that the Latin word *lympa* is derived from the Greek *nymphē*, "a nymph or inferior Goddess," they say. "The Muses were sometimes called *nymphs* by the poets. Hence (according to Webster) all persons in a state of rapture, as seers, poets, madmen, etc., were said to be caught by the nymphs."

The Goddess of Moisture (the Greek and Latin *nymph* or *lymph*, then) is fabled in India as being born from the *pores* of one of the Gods, whether the Ocean God, Varuna, or a minor "River God" is left to the particular sect and fancy of the believers. But the main question is, that the ancient Greeks and Latins are thus admittedly known to have shared in the same "superstitions" as the Hindus. This superstition is shown in their maintaining to this day that every atom of matter in the four (or five) Elements is an emanation from an inferior God or Goddess, himself or herself an earlier emanation from a superior deity; and, moreover, that each of these atoms—being Brahmâ, one of whose names is *Anu*, or atom—no sooner is it emanated than it *becomes endowed with consciousness*, each of its kind, and free-will, acting within the limits of law. Now, he who knows that the *kosmic trimurti* (trinity) composed of Brahmâ, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Siva, the Destroyer, is a most magnificent and scientific symbol of the *material* Universe

and its gradual evolution; and who finds a proof of this, in the etymology of the names of these deities,⁸ *plus* the doctrines of *Gupta Vidya*, or esoteric knowledge— knows also how to correctly understand this “superstition.” The five fundamental titles of Vishnu— added to that of *Anu* (atom) common to all the trimurtic personages—which are, *Bhutâtman*, one with the created or emanated materials of the world; *Pradhanâtman*, “one with the senses;” *Paramâtman*, “Supreme Soul”; and *Atman*, Kosmic Soul, or the Universal Mind—show sufficiently what the ancient Hindus meant by endowing with mind and consciousness every atom and giving it a distinct name of a God or a Goddess. Place their Pantheon, composed of 30 crores (or 300 millions) of deities within the macrocosm (the Universe), or inside the microcosm (man), and the number will not be found overrated, since they relate to the atoms, cells, and molecules of everything that is.

This, no doubt, is too poetical and abstruse for our generation, but it seems decidedly as scientific, if not more so, than the teachings derived from the latest discoveries of *Physiology* and *Natural History*.

⁸ *Brahma* comes from the root *brih*, “to expand,” to “scatter”; *Vishnu* from the root *vis* or *vish* (phonetically) “to enter into,” “to pervade” the universe, of matter. As to *Siva*— the patron of the Yogis, the etymology of his name would remain *incomprehensible* to the casual reader.

DIALOGUE ON THE MYSTERIES OF THE AFTER LIFE

ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE INNER MAN AND ITS DIVISION

M. Of course it is most difficult, and, as you say, “puzzling” to understand correctly and distinguish between the various *aspects*, called by us the “principles” of the real EGO. It is the more so as there exists a notable difference in the numbering of those principles by various Eastern schools, though at the bottom there is the same identical substratum of teaching in all of them.

X. Are you thinking of the Vedantins. They divide our seven “principles” into five only, I believe?

M. They do; but though I would not presume to dispute the point with a learned Vedantin, I may yet state as my private opinion that they have an obvious reason for it. With them it is only that compound spiritual aggregate which consists of various mental aspects that is called *Man* at all, the physical body being in their view something beneath contempt, and merely an *illusion*. Nor is the Vedanta the only philosophy to reckon in this manner. Lao-Tze in his *Tao-te-King*, mentions only five principles, because he, like the Vedantins, omits to include two principles, namely, the spirit (Atma) and the physical body, the latter of which, moreover, he calls “the cadaver.” Then there is the *Taraka Rajà Yogà* School. Its teaching recognizes only three “principles” in fact; but then, in reality, their *Sthulopadhi*, or the physical body in its *jagrata* or waking conscious state, their *Sukshmopadhi*, the same body in *svapna* or the dreaming state, and their *Karanopadhi* or “causal body,” or that which passes from one incarnation to another, are all dual in their aspects, and thus make six. Add to this Atma, the impersonal divine principle or the immortal element in Man, undistinguished from the Universal Spirit, and you have the same seven, again, as in the esoteric division.¹

X. Then it seems almost the same as the division made by mystic Christians: body, soul and spirit?

M. Just the same. We could easily make of the body the vehicle of the “vital Double”; of the latter the vehicle of Life or *Prana*;

¹ See “Secret Doctrine” for a clearer explanation.

of *Kamarupa* or (animal) soul, the vehicle of the *higher* and the *lower* mind, and make of this six principles, crowning the whole with the one immortal spirit. In Occultism, every qualificative change in the state of our consciousness gives to man a new aspect, and if it prevails and becomes part of the living and acting EGO, it must be (and is) given a special name, to distinguish the man in that particular state from the man he is when he places himself in another state.

X. It is just that which is so difficult to understand.

M. It seems to me very easy, on the contrary, once that you have seized the main idea, *i.e.*, that man acts on this, or another plane of consciousness, in strict accordance with his mental and spiritual condition. But such is the materialism of the age that the more we explain, the less people seem capable of understanding what we say. Divide the terrestrial being called man into three chief aspects, if you like; but, unless you make of him a pure animal, you cannot do less. Take his objective *body*; the feeling principle in him—which is only a little higher than the *instinctual* element in the animal—or the vital elementary soul; and that which places him so immeasurably beyond and higher than the animal—*i.e.*, his *reasoning* soul or “spirit.” Well, if we take these three groups or representative entities, and subdivide them, according to the occult teaching, what do we get?

First of all Spirit (in the sense of the Absolute, and therefore indivisible ALL) or Atma. As this can neither be located nor conditioned in philosophy, being simply that which is, in Eternity, and as the ALL cannot be absent from even the tiniest geometrical or mathematical point of the universe of matter or substance, it ought not to be called, in truth, a “human” principle at all. Rather, and at best, it is that point in metaphysical Space which the human Monad and its vehicle man, occupy for the period of every life. Now that point is as imaginary as man himself, and in reality is an illusion, a *maya*; but then for ourselves as for other personal Egos, we are a reality during that fit of illusion called life, and we have to take ourselves into account—in our own fancy at any rate if no one else does. To make it more conceivable to the human intellect, when first attempting the study of Occultism, and to solve the ABC of the mystery of man, Occultism calls it the *seventh* principle, the synthesis of the six, and gives it for vehicle the *Spiritual* Soul, *Buddhi*. Now the latter conceals a mystery, which is never given to anyone with

the exception of irrevocably pledged *chelas*, those at any rate, who can be safely trusted. Of course there would be less confusion, could it only be told; but, as this is directly concerned with the power of projecting one's double consciously and at will, and as this gift like the "ring of Gyges" might prove very fatal to men at large and to the possessor of that faculty in particular, it is carefully guarded. Alone the adepts, who have been tried and can never be found wanting, have the key of the mystery fully divulged to them . . . Let us avoid side issues, however, and hold to the "principles." This divine soul or Buddhi, then, is the Vehicle of the Spirit. In conjunction, these two are one, impersonal, and without any attributes (on this plane, of course), and make two spiritual "principles." If we pass on to the *Human Soul* (*manas*, the *mens*) everyone will agree that the intelligence of man is *dual* to say the least: *e.g.*, the high-minded man can hardly become low-minded; the very intellectual and spiritual minded man is separated by an abyss from the obtuse, dull and material, if not animal-minded man. Why then should not these men be represented by two "principles" or two aspects rather? Every man has these two principles in him, one more active than the other, and in rare cases, one of these is entirely stunted in its growth; so to say paralysed by the strength and predominance of the other *aspect*, during the life of man. These, then, are what we call the two principles or aspects of *Manas*, the higher and the lower; the former, the higher *Manas*, or the thinking, conscious EGO gravitating toward the Spiritual Soul (Buddhi); and the latter, or its instinctual principle attracted to *Kama*, the seat of animal desires and passions in man. Thus, we have *four* "principles" justified; the last three being (1) the "Double" which we have agreed to call Protean, or Plastic Soul; the vehicle of (2) the life *principle*; and (3) the physical body. Of course no Physiologist or Biologist will accept these principles, nor can he make head or tail of them. And this is why, perhaps, none of them understand to this day either the functions of the spleen, the physical vehicle of the Protean Double, or those of a certain organ on the right side of man, the seat of the above mentioned desires, nor yet does he know anything of the pineal gland, which he describes as a horny gland with a little sand in it, and which is the very key to the highest and divinest consciousness in man--his omniscient, spiritual and all embracing mind. This seemingly useless appendage is the pendulum which, once the clock-work of the *inner* man is wound up,

carries the spiritual vision of the EGO to the highest planes of perception, where the horizon open before it becomes almost infinite....

X. But the scientific materialists assert that after the death of man nothing remains; that the human body simply disintegrates into its component elements, and that what we call soul is merely a temporary self-consciousness produced as a by-product of organic action, which will evaporate like steam. Is not theirs a strange state of mind?

M. Not strange at all, that I see. If they say that self-consciousness ceases with the body, then in *their* case they simply utter an unconscious prophecy. For once that they are firmly convinced of what they assert, no conscious after-life is possible for them.

X. But if human self-consciousness survives death as a rule, why should there be exceptions?

M. In the fundamental laws of the spiritual world which are immutable, no exception is possible. But there are rules for those who see, and rules for those who prefer to remain blind.

X. Quite so, I understand. It is an aberration of a blind man, who denies the existence of the sun because he does not see it. But after death his spiritual eyes will certainly compel him to see?

M. They will not compel him, nor will he see anything. Having persistently denied an after-life during this life, he will be unable to sense it. His spiritual senses having been stunted, they cannot develop after death, and he will remain blind. By insisting that he *must* see it, you evidently mean one thing and I another. You speak of the spirit from the Spirit, or the flame from the Flame—of Atma in short—and you confuse it with the human soul—Manas. . . . You do not understand me, let me try to make it clear. The whole gist of your question is to know whether, in the case of a downright materialist, the complete loss of self-consciousness and self-perception after death is possible? Isn't it so? I say: It is possible. Because, believing firmly in our Esoteric Doctrine, which refers to the *Post-mortem* period, or the interval between two lives or births as merely a transitory state, I say:—Whether that interval between two acts of the illusionary drama of life lasts one year or a million, that *post-mortem* state may, without any breach of the fundamental law, prove to be just the same state as that of a man who is in a dead swoon.

X. But since you have just said that the fundamental laws of the after-death state admit of no exceptions, how can this be?

M. Nor do I say now that they admit of exceptions. But the spiritual law of continuity applies only to things which are truly real. To one who has read and understood Mundakya Upanishad and Vedanta-Sara all this becomes very clear. I will say more: it is sufficient to understand what we mean by Buddhi and the duality of Manas to have a very clear perception why the materialist may not have a self-conscious survival after death: because Manas, in its lower aspect, is the seat of the terrestrial mind, and, therefore, can give only that perception of the Universe which is based on the evidence of that mind, and not on our spiritual vision. It is said in our Esoteric school that between Buddhi and Manas, or Iswara and Pragna,² there is in reality no more difference than *between a forest and its trees, a lake and its waters*, just as Mundakya teaches. One or hundreds of trees dead from loss of vitality, or uprooted, are yet incapable of preventing the forest from being still a forest. The destruction or *post-mortem* death of one personality dropped out of the long series, will not cause the smallest change in the Spiritual divine *Ego*, and it will ever remain the same EGO. Only, instead of experiencing *Devachan* it will have to immediately reincarnate.

X. But as I understand it, Ego-Buddhi represents in this simile the forest and the personal minds the trees. And if Buddhi is immortal, how can that which is similar to it, *i.e.*, Manas-taijasi,³ lose entirely its consciousness till the day of its new incarnation? I cannot understand it.

M. You cannot, because you will mix up an abstract representation of the whole with its casual changes of form; and because you confuse *Manas-taijasi*, the *Buddhi*-lit human soul, with the latter, animalized. Remember that if it can be said of Buddhi that it is unconditionally immortal, the same cannot be said of Manas, still less of taijasi, which is an attribute. No *post-mortem* consciousness or Manas-Taijasi, can exist apart from Buddhi, the divine soul, because the first (*Manas*) is, in its lower aspect, a qualificative attribute of the terrestrial personality, and the second (*taijasi*) is identical with the first, and that it is the same Manas only with the light of

² Iswara is the collective consciousness of the manifested deity, Brahma, *i.e.*, the collective consciousness of the Host of Dhyan Chohans; and Pragna is their individual wisdom.

³ *Taijasi* means the radiant in consequence of the union with Buddhi of Manas, the human, illuminated by the radiance of the divine soul. Therefore Manas taijasi may be described as radiant mind; the human reason lit by the light of the spirit; and Buddhi-Manas is the representation of the divine *plus* the human intellect and self-consciousness.

Buddhi reflected on it. In its turn, Buddhi would remain only an impersonal spirit without this element which it borrows from the human soul, which conditions and makes of it, in this illusive Universe, *as it were something separate* from the universal soul for the whole period of the cycle of incarnation. Say rather that *Buddhi-Manas* can neither die nor lose its compound self-consciousness in Eternity, nor the recollection of its previous incarnations in which the two—*i.e.*, the spiritual and the human soul, had been closely linked together. But it is not so in the case of a materialist, whose human soul not only receives nothing from the divine soul, but even refuses to recognize its existence. You can hardly apply this axiom to the attributes and qualifications of the human soul, for it would be like saying that because your divine soul is immortal therefore the bloom on your cheek must also be immortal; whereas this bloom, like *taijasi*, or spiritual radiance, is simply a transitory phenomenon.

X. Do I understand you to say that we must not mix in our minds the noumenon with the phenomenon, the cause with its effect?

M. I do say so, and repeat that, limited to Manas or the human soul alone, the radiance of *Taijasi* itself becomes a mere question of time; because both immortality and consciousness after death become for the terrestrial personality of man simply conditioned attributes, as they depend entirely on conditions and beliefs created by the human soul itself during the life of its body. Karma acts incessantly; we reap *in our after-life* only the fruit of that which we have ourselves sown, or rather created, in our terrestrial existence.

X. But if my Ego can, after the destruction of my body, become plunged in a state of entire unconsciousness, then where can be the punishment for the sins of my past life?

M. Our philosophy teaches that Karmic punishment reaches the Ego only in the next incarnation. After death it receives only the reward for the unmerited sufferings endured during its just past existence.⁴ The whole punishment after death, even for the mate-

⁴ Some Theosophists have taken exception to this phrase, but the words are those of the Masters, and the meaning attached to the word "unmerited" is that given above. In the T.P.S. pamphlet No. 6, a phrase, criticised subsequently in *Lucifer* was used, which was intended to convey the same idea. In form however it was awkward and open to the criticism directed against it; but the essential idea was that men often suffer from the effects of the actions done by others, effects which thus do not strictly belong to their own Karma, but to that of other people—and for these sufferings they of course deserve compensation. If it is true to say that nothing that happens to us can be anything else than Karma—or the direct or indirect effect of a cause—it would be a great error to think that every evil or good which befalls us is due *only to our personal Karma*. (Vide further on.)

rialist, consists therefore in the absence of any reward and the utter loss of the consciousness of one's bliss and rest. Karma—is the child of the terrestrial Ego, the fruit of the actions of the tree which is the objective personality visible to all, as much as the fruit of all the thoughts and even motives of the spiritual “I”; but Karma is also the tender mother, who heals the wounds inflicted by her during the preceding life, before she will begin to torture this Ego by inflicting upon him new ones. If it may be said that there is not a mental or physical suffering in the life of a mortal, which is not the fruit and consequence of some sin in this, or a preceding existence, on the other hand, since he does not preserve the slightest recollection of it in his actual life, and feels himself not deserving of such punishment, but believes sincerely he suffers for no guilt of his own, this alone is quite sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence. Death comes to our spiritual selves ever as a deliverer and friend. For the materialist, who, notwithstanding his materialism, was not a bad man, the interval between the two lives will be like the unbroken and placid sleep of a child; either entirely dreamless, or with pictures of which he will have no definite perception. For the believer it will be a dream as vivid as life and full of realistic bliss and visions. As for the bad and cruel man, whether materialist or otherwise, he will be immediately reborn and suffer his hell on earth. To enter *Avitchi* is an exceptional and rare occurrence.

X. As far as I remember, the periodical incarnations of Sutratma⁵ are likened in some Upanishad to the life of a mortal which oscillates periodically between sleep and waking. This does not seem to me very clear, and I will tell you why. For the man who awakes, another day commences, but that man is the same in soul and body as he was the day before; whereas at every new incarnation a full change takes place not only in his external envelope, sex and personality, but even in his mental and psychic capacities. Thus the simile does not seem to me quite correct. The man who arises from sleep remembers quite clearly what he has done yesterday, the day before, and even months and years ago. But none of us has the

⁵ Our immortal and reincarnating principle in conjunction with the Manasic recollections of the preceding lives is called Sutratma, which means literally the Thread-Soul; because like the pearls on a thread so is the long series of human lives strung together on that one thread. Manas must become *tajasi*, the radiant, before it can hang on the Sutratma as a pearl on its thread, and so have full and absolute perception of itself in the Eternity. As said before, too close association with the terrestrial mind of the human soul alone causes this radiance to be entirely lost.

slightest recollection of a preceding life or any fact or event concerning it. . . . I may forget in the morning what I have dreamed during the night, still! I know that I have slept and have the certainty that I lived during sleep; but what recollection have I of my past incarnation? How do you reconcile this?

M. Yet some people do recollect their past incarnations. This is what the Arhats call Samma-Sambuddha—or the knowledge of the whole series of one's past incarnations.

X. But we ordinary mortals who have not reached Samma-Sambuddha, how can we be expected to realize this simile?

M. By studying it and trying to understand more correctly the characteristics of the three states of sleep. Sleep is a general and immutable law for man as for beast, but there are different kinds of sleep and still more different dreams and visions.

X. Just so. But this takes us from our subject. Let us return to the materialist who, while not denying dreams, which he could hardly do, yet denies immortality in general and the survival of his own individuality especially.

M. And the materialist is right for once, at least; since for one who has no inner perception and faith, there is no immortality possible. In order to live in the world to come a conscious life, one has to believe first of all in that life during one's terrestrial existence. On these two aphorisms of the Secret Science all the philosophy about the *post-mortem* consciousness and the immortality of the soul is built. The Ego receives always according to its deserts. After the dissolution of the body, there commences for it either a period of full clear consciousness, a state of chaotic dreams, or an utterly dreamless sleep indistinguishable from annihilation; and these are the three states of consciousness. Our physiologists find the cause of dreams and visions in an unconscious preparation for them during the waking hours; why cannot the same be admitted for the *post-mortem* dreams? I repeat it, *death is sleep*. After death begins, before the spiritual eyes of the soul, a performance according to a programme learnt and very often composed unconsciously by ourselves; the practical carrying out of *correct* beliefs or of illusions which have been created by ourselves. A Methodist, will be Methodist, a Mussulman, a Mussulman, of course, just for a time—in a perfect fool's paradise of each man's creation and making. These are the *post-mortem* fruits of the tree of life. Naturally, our belief or unbelief in the fact of conscious immortality is unable to

influence the unconditioned reality of the fact itself, once that it exists; but the belief or unbelief in that immortality, as the continuation or annihilation of separate entities, cannot fail to give colour to that fact in its application to each of these entities. Now do you begin to understand it?

X. I think I do. The materialist, disbelieving in everything that cannot be proven to him by his five senses or by scientific reasoning, and rejecting every spiritual manifestation, accepts life as the only conscious existence. Therefore, according to their beliefs so will it be unto them. They will lose their personal Ego, and will plunge into a dreamless sleep until a new awakening. Is it so?

M. Almost so. Remember the universal esoteric teaching of the two kinds of conscious existence: the terrestrial and the spiritual. The latter must be considered real from the very fact that it is the region of the eternal, changeless, immortal cause of all; whereas the incarnating Ego dresses itself up in new garments entirely different from those of its previous incarnations, and in which all except its spiritual prototype is doomed to a change so radical as to leave no trace behind.

X. Stop! . . . Can the consciousness of my terrestrial *Egos* perish not only for a time, like the consciousness of the materialist, but in any case so entirely as to leave no trace behind?

M. According to the teaching, it must so perish and in its fullness, all except that principle which, having united itself with the Monad, has thereby become a purely spiritual and indestructible essence, one with it in the Eternity. But in the case of an out and out materialist, in whose personal "I" no Buddhi has ever reflected itself, how can the latter carry away into the infinitudes one particle of that terrestrial personality? Your spiritual "I" is immortal; but from your present Self it can carry away into after life but that which has become worthy of immortality, namely, the aroma alone of the flower that has been mown by death.

X. Well, and the flower, the terrestrial "I"?

M. The flower, as all past and future flowers which blossomed and died, and will blossom again on the mother bough, the *Sutratma*, all children of one root of Buddhi, will return to dust. Your present "I," as you yourself know, is not the body now sitting before me, nor yet is it what I would call Manas-Sutrama—but *Sutratma-Buddhi*.

X. But this does not explain to me at all, why you call life after death immortal, infinite, and real, and the terrestrial life a simple phantom or illusion; since even that *post-mortem* life has limits, however much wider they may be than those of terrestrial life.

M. No doubt. The spiritual Ego of Man moves in Eternity like a pendulum between the hours of life and death. But if these hours marking the periods of terrestrial and spiritual life are limited in their duration, and if the very number of such stages in Eternity between sleep and awakening, illusion and reality, has its beginning and its end, on the other hand the spiritual "Pilgrim" is eternal. Therefore are the hours of his *post-mortem* life—when, disembodied he stands face to face with truth and not the mirages of his transitory earthly existences during the period of that pilgrimage which we call "the cycle of rebirths"—the only reality in our conception. Such intervals, their limitation notwithstanding, do not prevent the Ego, while ever perfecting itself, to be following un-deviatingly, though gradually and slowly, the path to its last transformation, when that Ego having reached its goal becomes the divine ALL. These intervals and stages help towards this final result instead of hindering it; and without such limited intervals the divine Ego could never reach its ultimate goal. This Ego is the actor, and its numerous and various incarnations the parts it plays. Shall you call these parts with their costumes the individuality of the actor himself? Like that actor, the Ego is forced to play during the Cycle of Necessity up to the very threshold of *Para-nirvana*, many parts such as may be unpleasant to it. But as the bee collects its honey from every flower, leaving the rest as food for the earthly worms, so does our spiritual individuality, whether we call it Sutratma or Ego. It collects from every terrestrial personality into which Karma forces it to incarnate, the nectar alone of the spiritual qualities and self-consciousness, and uniting all these into one whole it emerges from its chrysalis as the glorified Dhyan Chohan. So much the worse for those terrestrial personalities from which it could collect nothing. Such personalities cannot assuredly outlive consciously their terrestrial existence.

X. Thus then it seems, that for the terrestrial personality, immortality is still conditional. Is then immortality itself *not* unconditional?

M. Not at all. But it cannot touch the *non-existent*. For all that which exists as SAT, ever aspiring to SAT, immortality and

Eternity are absolute. Matter is the opposite pole of spirit and yet the two are one. The essence of all this, *i.e.* Spirit, Force, and Matter, or the three in one, is as endless as it is beginningless; but the form acquired by this triple unity during its incarnations, the externality, is certainly only the illusion of our personal conceptions. Therefore do we call the after-life alone a reality, while relegating the terrestrial life, its terrestrial personality included, to the phantom realm of illusion.

X. But why in such a case not call sleep the reality, and waking the illusion, instead of the reverse?

M. Because we use an expression made to facilitate the grasping of the subject, and from the standpoint of terrestrial conceptions it is a very correct one.

X. Nevertheless, I cannot understand. If the life to come is based on justice and the merited retribution for all our terrestrial suffering, how, in the case of materialists many of whom are ideally honest and charitable men, should there remain of their personality nothing but the refuse of a faded flower!

M. No one ever said such a thing. No materialist, if a good man, however unbelieving, can die forever in the fulness of his spiritual individuality. What was said is, that the consciousness of one life can disappear either fully or partially; in the case of a thorough materialist, no vestige of that personality which disbelieved remains in the series of lives.

X. But is this not annihilation to the Ego?

M. Certainly not. One can sleep a dead sleep during a long railway journey, miss one or several stations without the slightest recollection or consciousness of it, awake at another station and continue the journey recollecting other halting places, till the end of that journey, when the goal is reached. Three kinds of sleep were mentioned to you: the dreamless, the chaotic, and the one so real, that to the sleeping man his dreams become full realities. If you believe in the latter why can't you believe in the former? According to what one has believed in and expected after death, such is the state one will have. He who expected no life to come will have an absolute blank amounting to annihilation in the interval between the two rebirths. This is just the carrying out of the programme we spoke of, and which is created by the materialist himself. But there are various kinds of materialists, as you say. A selfish wicked Egoist, one who

never shed a tear for anyone but himself, thus adding entire indifference to the whole world to his unbelief, must drop at the threshold of death his personality forever. This personality having no tendrils of sympathy for the world around, and hence nothing to hook on to the string of the Sutratma, every connection between the two is broken with the last breath. There being no Devachan for such a materialist, the Sutratma will re-incarnate almost immediately. But those materialists who erred in nothing but their disbelief, will oversleep but one station. Moreover, the time will come when the ex-materialist will perceive himself in the Eternity and perhaps repent that he lost even one day, or station, from the life eternal.

X. Still, would it not be more correct to say that death is birth into a new life, or a return once more to the threshold of eternity?

M. You may if you like. Only remember that births differ, and that there are births of "still-born" beings, which are *failures*. Moreover, with your fixed Western ideas about material life, the words "living" and "being" are quite inapplicable to the pure subjective state of *post-mortem* existence. It is just because of such ideas—save in a few philosophers who are not read by the many and who themselves are too confused to present a distinct picture of it—that all your conceptions of life and death have finally become so narrow. On the one hand, they have led to crass materialism, and on the other, to the still more material conception of the other life which the Spiritualists have formulated in their Summer-land. There the souls of men eat, drink and marry, and live in a Paradise quite as sensual as that of Mohammed, but even less philosophical. Nor are the average conceptions of the uneducated Christians any better, but are still more material, if possible. What between truncated Angels, brass trumpets, golden harps, streets in paradisiacal cities paved with jewels, and hell-fires, it seems like a scene at a Christmas pantomime. It is because of these narrow conceptions that you find such difficulty in understanding. And, it is also just because the life of the disembodied soul, while possessing all the vividness of reality, as in certain dreams, is devoid of every grossly objective form of terrestrial life, that the Eastern philosophers have compared it with visions during sleep.

A NOTE ON "MEMORY"

NOTHING that takes place, no manifestation however rapid or weak, can ever be lost from the *Skandhic* record of a man's life. Not the smallest sensation, the most trifling action, impulse, thought, impression, or deed, can fade or go out from, or in the Universe. We may think it unregistered by our memory, unperceived by our consciousness, yet it will still be recorded on the tablets of the astral light. Personal memory is a fiction of the physiologist. There are cells in our brain that receive and convey sensations and impressions, but this once done, their mission is accomplished. These cells of the supposed "organ of memory" are the *receivers* and *conveyors* of all the pictures and impressions of the past, not their *retainers*. Under various conditions and stimuli, they can receive instantaneously the reflection of these astral images back again, and this is called *memory, recollection, remembrance*; but they do not preserve them. When it is said that one has lost his memory, or that it is weakened, it is only a *facon de parler*; it is our memory-cells alone that are enfeebled or destroyed. The window glass allows us to see the sun, moon, stars, and all the objects outside clearly; crack the pane and all these outside images will be seen in a distorted way; break the window-pane altogether and replace it with a board, or draw the blind down, and the images will be shut out altogether from your sight. But can you say because of this, that all these images—sun, moon, and stars—have disappeared, or that by repairing the window with a new pane, the same will not be reflected again into your room? There are cases on record of long months and years of insanity, of long days of fever when almost everything done or said, was done and said unconsciously. Yet when the patients recovered they remembered occasionally their words and deeds and very fully. *Unconscious* cerebration is a phenomenon on this plane and may hold good so far as the personal mind is concerned. But the Universal Memory preserves every motion, the slightest wave and feeling that ripples the waves of differentiated nature, of man or of the Universe.

THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

WHAT is Life? Hundreds of the most philosophical minds, scores of learned well-skilled physicians, have asked themselves the question, but to little purpose. The veil thrown over primordial Kosmos and the mysterious beginnings of life upon it, has never been withdrawn to the satisfaction of earnest, honest science. The more the men of official learning try to penetrate through its dark folds, the more intense becomes that darkness, and the less they see, for they are like the treasure-hunter, who went across the wide seas to look for that which lay buried in his own garden.

What is then this Science? Is it biology, or the study of life in its general aspect? No. Is it physiology, or the science of organic function? Neither; for the former leaves the problem as much the riddle of the Sphinx as ever; and the latter is the science of death far more than that of life. Physiology is based upon the study of the different organic functions and the organs necessary to the manifestations of life, but that which science calls living matter, is, in sober truth, *dead matter*. Every molecule of the living organs contains the germ of death in itself, and begins dying as soon as born, in order that its successor-molecules should live only to die in its turn. An organ, a natural part of every living being, is but the medium for some special function in life, and is a combination of such molecules. The vital organ, the *whole*, puts the mask of life on, and thus conceals the constant decay and death of its parts. Thus, neither biology nor physiology are the science, nor even branches of the *Science of Life*, but only that of the *appearances* of life. While true philosophy stands Oedipus-like before the Sphinx of life, hardly daring to utter the paradox contained in the answer to the riddle propounded, materialistic science, as arrogant as ever, never doubting its own wisdom for one moment, biologises itself and many others into the belief that it has solved the awful problem of existence. In truth, however, has it even so much as approached its threshold? It is not, surely, by attempting to deceive itself and the unwary in saying that life is but the result of molecular complexity, that it can ever

hope to promote the truth. Is vital force, indeed, only a "phantom," as Du-Bois Reymond calls it? For his taunt that "life," as something independent, is but the *asylum ignorantiae* of those who seek refuge in abstractions, when direct explanation is impossible, applies with far more force and justice to those materialists who would blind people to the reality of facts, by substituting bombast and jaw-breaking words in their place. Have any of the five divisions of the functions of life, so pretentiously named—Archebiosis, Biocrosis, Biodiaeresis, Biocaenosis and Bioparodosis¹, ever helped a Huxley or a Haeckel to probe more fully the mystery of the generations of the humblest ant—let alone of man? Most certainly not. For life, and everything pertaining to it, belongs to the lawful domain of the *metaphysician* and psychologist, and physical science has no claim upon it. "That which hath been, is that which shall be; and that which hath been is named already—and it is known that it is MAN"—is the answer to the riddle of the Sphinx. But "Man" here, does not refer to *physical* man—not in its esoteric meaning, at any rate. Scalpels and microscopes may solve the mystery of the material parts of *the shell of man*: they can never cut a window into his soul to open the smallest vista on any of the wider horizons of being.

It is those thinkers alone, who, following the Delphic injunction, have cognized life in their *inner* selves, those who have studied it thoroughly in themselves, before attempting to trace and analyze its reflection in their outer shells, who are the only ones rewarded with some measure of success. Like the fire-philosophers of the Middle Ages, they have skipped over the *appearances* of light and fire in the world of effects, and centred their whole attention upon the producing arcane agencies. Thence, tracing these to the one abstract cause, they have attempted to fathom the MYSTERY, each as far as his intellectual capacities permitted him. Thus they have ascertained that (1) the *seemingly* living mechanism called physical man, is but the fuel, the material, upon which life feeds, in order to manifest itself; and (2) that thereby the inner man receives as his wage and reward the possibility of accumulating additional experiences of the terrestrial illusions called lives.

One of such philosophers is now undeniably the great Russian novelist and reformer, Count Lef N. Tolstoi. How near his views are to the esoteric and philosophical teachings of higher Theosophy

¹ Or Life-origination, Life-fusion, Life-division, Life-renewal and Life-transmission.

will be found on the perusal of a few fragments from a lecture delivered by him at Moscow before the local Psychological Society.

Discussing the problem of life, the Count asks his audience to admit, for the sake of argument, *an impossibility*. Says the lecturer:

Let us grant for a moment that all that which modern science longs to learn of life, it has learnt, and now knows; that the problem has become as clear as day; that it is clear how organic matter has, by simple adaptation, come to be originated from inorganic material; that it is as clear how natural forces may be transformed into feelings, will, thought, and that finally, all this is known, not only to the city student, but to every village schoolboy, as well.

I am aware, then, that such and such thoughts and feelings originate from such and such motions. Well, and what then? Can I, or cannot I, produce and guide such motions, in order to excite within my brain corresponding thoughts? The question—what are the thoughts and feelings I ought to generate in myself and others, remains still, not only unsolved, but even untouched.

Yet it is precisely this question which is the *one* fundamental question of the central idea of life.

Science has chosen as its object a few manifestations that accompany life; and *mistaking*² the part for the whole, called these manifestations the integral total of life. . . .

The question inseparable from the idea of life is not *whence* life, but *how one should live* that life: and it is only by first starting with this question that one can hope to approach some solution in the problem of existence.

The answer to the query "How are we to live?" appears so simple to man that he esteems it hardly worth his while to touch upon it.

. . . One must live the best way one can—that's all. This seems at first sight very simple and well known to all, but it is by far neither as simple nor as well known as one may imagine. . . .

The idea of life appears to man in the beginning as a most simple and self-evident business. First of all, it seems to him that life is in himself, in his own body. No sooner, however, does one commence his search after that life, in any one given spot of the said body,

² "Mistaking" is an erroneous term to use. The men of science know but too well that what they teach concerning life is a materialistic fiction contradicted at every step by logic and fact. In this particular question science is abused, and made to serve personal hobbies and a determined policy of crushing in humanity every spiritual aspiration and thought. "Pretending to mistake" would be more correct.—H.P.B.

than one meets with difficulties. Life is not in the hair, nor in the nails; neither is it in the foot nor the arm, which may both be amputated; it is not in the blood, it is not in the heart, and it is not in the brain. It is everywhere and it is nowhere. It comes to this: Life cannot be found in any of its dwelling-places. Then man begins to look for life in Time; and that, too, appears at first a very easy matter. . . . Yet again, no sooner has he started on his chase than he perceives that here also the business is more complicated than he had thought. Now, I have *lived* fifty-eight years, so says my baptismal church record. But I know that out of these fifty-eight years I slept over twenty. How then? have I lived all these years, or have I not? Deduct the months of my gestation, and those I passed in the arms of my nurse, and shall we call this life, also? Again, out of the remaining thirty-eight years, I know that a good half of that time I slept while moving about; and thus, I could no more say in this case, whether I lived during that time or not. I may have lived a little, and vegetated a little. Here again, one finds that in time, as in the body, life is everywhere, yet nowhere. And now the question naturally arises, whence, then, that life which I can trace to nowhere? Now—will I learn. . . . But it so happens that in this direction also, what seemed to me so easy at first, now seems impossible. I must have been searching for something else, not for my life, assuredly. Therefore, once we have to go in search of the whereabouts of life—if search we have to—then it should be neither in space nor in time, neither as cause nor effect, but as a something which I cognize within myself as quite independent from Space, time and causality.

That which remains to do now is to study *self*. But how do I cognize life in myself?

This is how I cognize it. I know, to begin with, that I live; and that I live wishing for myself everything that is good, wishing this since I can remember myself, to this day, and from morn till night. All that lives outside of myself is important in my eyes, but only in so far as it co-operates with the creation of that which is productive of *my* welfare. The Universe is important in my sight only because it can give *me*, pleasure.

Meanwhile, something else is bound up with this knowledge in me of my existence. Inseparable from the life I feel, is another cognition allied to it; namely, that besides myself, I am surrounded with a whole world of living creatures, possessed, as I am myself,

of the same instinctive realization of their exclusive lives; and that all these creatures live for their own objects, which objects are foreign to me; that those creatures do not know, nor do they care to know, anything of my pretensions to an exclusive life, and that all these creatures, in order to achieve success in their objects, are ready to annihilate me at any moment. But this is not all. While watching the destruction of creatures similar in all to myself, I also know that for me too, for that precious ME in whom alone life is represented, a very speedy and inevitable destruction is lying in wait.

It is as if there were two "I's" in man; it is as if they could never live in peace together; it is as if they were eternally struggling, and ever trying to expel each other.

One "I" says, "I alone am living as one should live, all the rest only seems to live. Therefore, the whole *raison d'être* for the universe is in that I may be made comfortable."

The other "I" replies, "The universe is not for thee at all, but for its own aims and purposes, and it cares little to know whether thou art happy or unhappy."

Life becomes a dreadful thing after this!

One "I" says, "I only want the gratification of all my wants and desires, and that is why I need the universe."

The other "I" replies, "All animal life lives only for the gratification of its wants and desires. It is the wants and desires of animals alone that are gratified at the expense and detriment of other animals; hence the ceaseless struggle between the animal species. Thou art an animal, and therefore thou hast to struggle. Yet, however successful in thy struggle, the rest of the struggling creatures must sooner or later crush thee."

Still worse! life becomes still more dreadful. . . .

But the most terrible of all, that which includes in itself the whole of the foregoing, is that:—

One "I" says, "I want to live, to live for ever."

And that the other "I" replies, "Thou shalt surely, perhaps in a few minutes, die; as also shall die all those thou lovest, for thou and they are destroying with every motion your lives, and thus approaching ever nearer suffering, death, all that which thou so hatest, and which thou fearest above anything else."

This is the worst of all. . . .

To change this condition is impossible . . . One can avoid moving, sleeping, eating, even breathing, but one cannot escape from thinking. One thinks, and that thought, *my* thought, is poisoning every step in my life, as a personality.

No sooner has man commenced a conscious life than that consciousness repeats to him incessantly without respite, over and over the same thing again. "To live such life as you feel and see in your past, the life lived by animals and many men too, lived in *that* way, which made you become what you are now—is no longer possible. Were you to attempt doing so, you could never escape thereby the struggle with all the world of creatures which live as you do—for their personal objects; and then those creatures will inevitably destroy you." . . .

To change this situation is impossible. There remains but one thing to do, and that is always done by him who, beginning to live, transfers his objects in life outside of himself, and aims to reach them. . . . But, however far he places them outside his personality, as his mind gets clearer, none of these objects will satisfy him.

Bismarck, having united Germany, and now ruling Europe—if his reason has only thrown any light upon the results of his activity—must perceive, as much as his own cook does who prepares a dinner that will be devoured in an hour's time, the same unsolved contradiction between the vanity and foolishness of all he has done, and the eternity and reasonableness of that which exists for ever. If they only think of it, each will see as clearly as the other; *firstly*, that the preservation of the integrity of Prince Bismarck's dinner, as well as that of powerful Germany, is solely due: the preservation of the former—to the police, and the preservation of the latter to the army; and that, so long only as both keep a good watch. Because there are famished people who would willingly eat the dinner, and nations which would fain be as powerful as Germany. *Secondly*, that neither Prince Bismarck's dinner, nor the might of the German Empire, coincide with the aims and purposes of universal life, but that they are in flagrant contradiction with them. And *thirdly*, that as he who cooked the dinner, so also the might of Germany, will both very soon die, and that so shall perish, and as soon, both the dinner and Germany. That which shall survive alone is the Universe, which will never give one thought to either dinner or Germany, least of all to those who have cooked them.

As the intellectual condition of man increases, he comes to the

idea that no happiness connected with his personality is an achievement, but only a necessity. Personality is only that incipient state from which begins life, and the ultimate limit of life. . . .

Where, then, does life begin, and where does it end, I may be asked? Where ends the night, and where does day commence? Where, on the shore, ends the domain of the sea, and where does the domain of land begin?

There is day and there is night; there is land and there is sea; there is life and there is *no* life.

Our life, ever since we became conscious of it, is a pendulum-like motion between two limits.

One limit is, an absolute unconcern for the life of the infinite Universe, an energy directed only toward the gratification of one's own personality.

The other limit is a complete renunciation of that personality, the greatest concern with the life of the infinite Universe, in full accord with it, the transfer of all our desires and good will from one's self, to that infinite Universe and all the creatures outside of us.³

The nearer to the first limit, the less life and bliss, the closer to the second, the more life and bliss. Therefore, man is ever moving from one end to the other; i.e., he lives. **THIS MOTION IS LIFE ITSELF.**

And when I speak of life, know that the idea of it is indissolubly connected in my conceptions with that of *conscious* life. No other life is known to me except conscious life. nor can it be known to anyone else.

We call life, the life of animals, organic life. But this is no life at all, only a certain state or condition of life manifesting to us.

But what is this consciousness or mind, the exigencies of which exclude personality and transfer the energy of man outside of him and into that state which is conceived by us as the blissful state of love?

What is conscious mind? Whatsoever we may be defining, we have to define it with our conscious mind. Therefore, with what shall we define mind? . . .

If we have to define all with our mind, it follows that conscious mind cannot be defined. Yet all of us, we not only know it, but it is

3. This is what the Theosophists call "living the life"—in a nut-shell.—H.P.B.

the only thing which is given to us to know undeniably. . . .

It is the same law as the law of life, of everything organic, animal or vegetable, with that one difference that we *see* the consummation of an intelligent law in the life of a plant. But the law of conscious mind, to which we are subjected, as the tree is subjected to its law, we *see* it not, but fulfil it. . . .

We have settled that life is that which is not our life. It is herein that lies hidden the root of error. Instead of studying that life of which we are conscious within ourselves, absolutely and exclusively—since we can know of nothing else—in order to study it, we observe that which is devoid of the most important factor and faculty of our life, namely, intelligent consciousness. By so doing, we act as a man who attempts to study an object by its shadow or reflection does.

If we know that substantial particles are subjected during their transformation to the activity of the organism; we know it not because we have observed or studied it, but simply because we possess a certain familiar organism united to us, namely the organism of our animal, which is but too well known to us as the material of our life; *i.e.*, that upon which we are called to work and to rule by subjecting it to the law of reason. . . . No sooner has man lost faith in life, no sooner has he transferred that life into that which is no life, than he becomes wretched, and sees death. . . . A man who conceives life such as he finds it in his consciousness, know neither misery, nor death: for all the good in life for him is in the subjection of his animal to the law of reason, to do which is not only in his power, but takes place unavoidably in him. The death of particles in the animal being, we know. The death of animals and of man, as an animal, we know; but we know nought about the death of conscious mind, nor can we know anything of it, *just because that conscious mind is the very life itself. And Life can never be Death.* . . .

The animal lives an existence of bliss, neither seeing nor knowing death, and dies without cognizing it. Why then should man have received the gift of seeing and knowing it, and why should death be so terrible to him that it actually tortures his soul, often forcing him to kill himself out of sheer fear of death? Why should it be so? Because the man who sees death is a sick man, one who has broken the law of his life, and lives no longer a conscious existence. He has become an animal himself, an animal which also has broken the law of life.

The life of man is an aspiration to bliss, and that which he aspires to is given to him. The light lit in the soul of man is bliss and life, and that light can never be darkness, as there exists—verily there exists for man—only this solitary light which burns within his soul.

We have translated this rather lengthy fragment from the Report of Count Tolstoi's superb lecture, because it reads like the echo of the finest teachings of the universal ethics of true theosophy. His definition of life in its abstract sense, and of the life every earnest theosophist ought to follow, each according to, and in the measure of, his *natural* capacities—is the summary and the Alpha and the Omega of practical psychic, if not spiritual life. There are sentences in the lecture which, to the average theosophist, will seem too hazy, and perhaps incomplete. Not one will he find, however, which could be objected to by the most exacting, practical occultist. It may be called a treatise on the Alchemy of Soul. For that "solitary" light in man, which burns for ever, and can never be darkness in its intrinsic nature, though the "animal" outside us may remain blind to it—is that "Light" upon which the Neo-Platonists of the Alexandrian school, and after them the Rosicrucians and especially the Alchemists, have written volumes, though to the present day their true meaning is a dark mystery to most men.

True, Count Tolstoi is neither an Alexandrian nor a modern theosophist; still less is he a Rosicrucian or an Alchemist. But that which the latter have concealed under the peculiar phraseology of the Fire-philosophers, purposely confusing cosmic transmutations with Spiritual Alchemy, all that is transferred by the great Russian thinker from the realm of the metaphysical unto the field of practical life. That which Schelling would define as a realization of the identity of subject and object in the man's inner Ego, that which unites and blends the latter with the universal Soul—which is but the identity of subject and object on a higher plane, or the unknown Deity—all that Count Tolstoi has blended together without quitting the terrestrial plane. He is one of those few *elect* who begin with intuition and end with *quasi*-omniscience. It is the transmutation of the baser metals—the *animal mass*—into gold and silver, or the philosopher's stone, the development and manifestation of man's higher SELF which the Count has achieved. The *alcahest* of the inferior Alchemist is the *All-geist*, the all-pervading Divine Spirit

of the higher Initiate; for Alchemy was, and is, as very few know to this day, as much a spiritual philosophy as it is a physical science. He who knows nought of one, will never know much of the other. Aristotle told it in so many words to his pupil, Alexander: "It is not a stone," he said, of the philosopher's stone. "*It is in every man and in every place*, and at all seasons, and is called the *end* of all philosophers," as the *Vedanta* is the *end* of all philosophies.

To wind up this essay *on the Science of Life*, a few words may be said of the eternal riddle propounded to mortals by the Sphinx. To fail to solve the problem contained in it, was to be doomed to sure death, as the Sphinx of life devoured the unintuitional, who would live only in their "animal." He who lives for Self, and only for *Self*, will surely die, as the higher "I" tells the lower "animal" in the Lecture. The riddle has seven keys to it, and the Count opens the mystery with one of the highest. For, as the author on "Hermetic Philosophy" beautifully expressed it: "The real mystery most familiar and, at the same time, most unfamiliar to every man, *into which he must be initiated or perish as an atheist, is himself*. For him is the elixir of life, to quaff which, before the discovery of the philosopher's stone, is to drink the beverage of death, while it confers on the adept and the *epopt*, the true immortality. He may know truth as it really is—*Aletheia*, the breath of God, or Life, the conscious mind in man."

This is "the Alcahest which dissolves all things," and Count Tolstoi has well understood the riddle.

THE MIND IN NATURE

GREAT is the self-satisfaction of modern science, and unexampled its achievements. Pre-Christian and mediæval philosophers may have left a few landmarks over unexplored mines: but the discovery of all the gold and priceless jewels is due to the patient labours of the modern scholar. And thus they declare that the genuine, real knowledge of the nature of the Kosmos and of man is all of recent growth. The luxuriant modern plant has sprung from the dead weeds of ancient superstitions.

Such, however, is not the view of the students of Theosophy. And they say that it is not sufficient to speak contemptuously of "the untenable conceptions of an uncultivated past," as Mr. Tyndall and others have done, to hide the intellectual quarries out of which the reputations of so many modern philosophers and scientists have been hewn. How many of our distinguished scientists have derived honour and credit by merely dressing up the ideas of those old philosophers, whom they are ever ready to disparage, is left to an impartial posterity to say. But conceit and self-opinionatedness have fastened like two hideous cancers on the brains of the average man of learning; and this is especially the case with the Orientalists—Sanskritists, Egyptologists and Assyriologists. The former are guided (or perhaps only pretend to be guided) by post-Mahâ-bhâratan commentators; the latter by arbitrarily interpreted papyri, collated with what this or the other Greek writer said, or passed over in silence, and by the cuneiform inscriptions on half-destroyed clay tablets copied by the Assyrians from "Accado-" Babylonian records. Too many of them are apt to forget, at every convenient opportunity, that the numerous changes in language, the allegorical phraseology and evident secretiveness of old mystic writers, who were generally under the obligation never to divulge the solemn secrets of the sanctuary, might have sadly misled both translators and commentators. Most of our Orientalists will rather allow their conceit to run away with their logic and reasoning powers than admit their ignorance, and they will proudly claim like Professor Sayce¹

¹ See the *Hibbert Lectures* for 1887, pages 14-17, on the origin and growth of the religion of the ancient Babylonians, where Prof. A. H. Sayce says that though "many of

that they have unriddled the true meaning of the religious symbols of old, and can interpret esoteric texts far more correctly than could the initiated hierophants of Chaldæa and Egypt. This amounts to saying that the ancient hierogrammatists and priests, who were the inventors of all the allegories which served as veils to the many truths taught at the Initiations, did not possess a clue to the sacred texts composed or written by themselves. But this is on a par with that other illusion of some Sanskritists, who, though they have never even been in India, claim to know Sanskrit accent and pronunciation, as also the meaning of the Vedic allegories, far better than the most learned among the greatest Brahmânical pundits and Sanskrit scholars of India.

After this who can wonder that the jargon and blunders of our mediæval alchemists and Kabalists are also read literally by the modern student; that the Greek and even the ideas of Aeschylus are *corrected* and improved upon by the Cambridge and Oxford Greek scholars, and that the veiled parables of Plato are attributed to his "ignorance." Yet if the students of the dead languages know anything, they ought to know that the method of extreme necessitarianism was practiced in ancient as well as in modern philosophy; that from the first ages of man, the fundamental truths of all that we are permitted to know on earth were in the safe keeping of the Adepts of the sanctuary; that the difference in creeds and religious practice was only external; and that those guardians of the primitive divine revelation, who had solved every problem that is within the grasp of human intellect, were bound together by a universal freemasonry of science and philosophy, which formed one unbroken chain around the globe. It is for philology and the Orientalists to endeavour to find the end of the thread. But if they will persist in seeking it in one direction only, and that the wrong one, truth and fact will never be discovered. It thus remains the duty of psychology and Theosophy to help the world to arrive at them. Study the Eastern religions by the light of Eastern—not Western—philosophy, and if you

the sacred texts were so written as to be intelligible *only to the initiated* [italics mine] . . . provided with keys and glosses," nevertheless, as many of the latter, he adds "are in our hands," they (the Orientalists) have "a clue to the interpretation of these documents which even the initiated priests did not possess." (p. 17.) This "clue" is the modern craze, so dear to Mr. Gladstone, and so stale in its monotony to most, which consists in perceiving in every symbol of the religions of old a solar myth, dragged down, whenever opportunity requires, to a sexual or phallic emblem. Hence the statement that while "Gisduhar was but a champion and conqueror of old times," for the Orientalists, who "can penetrate beneath the myths" he is but a solar hero, who was himself but the transformed descendant of a humbler God of Fire (*loc. cit.*, p. 17).

happen to relax correctly one single loop of the old religious systems, the chain of mystery may be disentangled. But to achieve this, one must not agree with those who teach that it is unphilosophical to enquire into first causes, and that all that we can do is to consider their physical effects. The field of scientific investigation is bounded by physical nature on every side; hence, once the limits of matter are reached, enquiry must stop and work be re-commenced. As the Theosophist has no desire to play at being a squirrel upon its revolving wheel, he must refuse to follow the lead of the materialists. He, at any rate, knows that the revolutions of the physical world are, according to the ancient doctrine, attended by like revolutions in the world of intellect, for the spiritual evolution in the universe proceeds in cycles, like the physical one. Do we not see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress? Do we not see in history, and even find this within our own experience, that the great kingdoms of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended? till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, to the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended. Kingdoms and empires are under the same cyclic laws as plants, races and everything else in Kosmos.

The division of the history of mankind into what the Hindus call the Sattva, Tretya, Dvâpara and Kali Yugas, and what the Greeks referred to as "the Golden, Silver, Copper, and Iron Ages" is not a fiction. We see the same thing in the literature of peoples. An age of great inspiration and unconscious productiveness is invariably followed by an age of criticism and consciousness. The one affords material for the analyzing and critical intellect of the other. "The moment is more opportune than ever for the review of old philosophies. Archæologists, philologists, astronomers, chemists and physicists are getting nearer and nearer to the point where they will be forced to consider them. Physical science has already reached its limits of exploration; dogmatic theology sees the springs of its inspiration dry. The day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known." Once more the prophecy already made in *Isis Unveiled* twenty-two years ago is reiterated. "Secrets long kept may be revealed; books long forgotten

and arts long time lost may be brought out to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies, or stumbled upon them in buried crypts; tablets and pillars, whose sculptured revelations will stagger theologians and confound scientists, may yet be excavated and interpreted. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun. The cycle has almost run its course; a new one is about to begin, and the future pages of history may contain full evidence, and convey full proof of the above.”

Since the day that this was written much of it has come to pass, the discovery of the Assyrian clay tiles and their records alone having forced the interpreters of the cuneiform inscriptions—both Christians and Freethinkers—to alter the very age of the world.²

The chronology of the Hindu Purânas, reproduced in *The Secret Doctrine*, is now derided, but the time may come when it will be universally accepted. This may be regarded as simply an assumption, but it will be so only for the present. It is in truth but a question of time. The whole issue of the quarrel between the defenders of ancient wisdom and its detractors—lay and clerical—rests (a) on the incorrect comprehension of the old philosophies, for the lack of the keys the Assyriologists boast of having discovered; and (b) on the materialistic and anthropomorphic tendencies of the age. This in no wise prevents the Darwinists and materialistic philosophers from digging into the intellectual mines of the ancients and helping themselves to the wealth of ideas they find in them; nor the divines from discovering Christian dogmas in Plato’s philosophy and calling them “presentiments,” as in Dr. Lundy’s *Monumental Christianity*, and other like modern works.

Of such “presentiments” the whole literature—or what remains of this sacerdotal literature—of India, Egypt, Chaldæa, Persia, Greece and even of Guatemala (*Popul Vuh*), is full. Based on the same foundation-stone—the ancient Mysteries—the primitive religions, all without one exception, reflect the most important of the once universal beliefs, such, for instance, as an impersonal and universal divine Principle, absolute in its nature, and unknowable to the “brain” intellect, or the conditioned and limited cognition of

² Sargon, the first “Semitic” monarch of Babylonia, the prototype and original of Moses, is now placed 3,750 years B. C. (p. 21), and the Third Dynasty of Egypt “some 6,000 years ago,” hence some years before the world was created, agreeably to Biblical chronology. (Vide *Hibbert Lectures on Babylonia*, by A. H. Sayce, 1887, pp. 21 and 33.)

man. To imagine any witness to it in the manifested universe, other than as Universal Mind, the Soul of the universe—is impossible. That which alone stands as an undying and ceaseless evidence and proof of the existence of that One Principle, is the presence of an undeniable design in kosmic mechanism, the birth, growth, death and transformation of everything in the universe, from the silent and unreachable stars down to the humble lichen, from man to the invisible lives now called microbes. Hence the universal acceptance of “Thought Divine,” the Anima Mundi of all antiquity. This idea of Mahat (the great) Akâshâ or Brahmâ’s aura of transformation with the Hindus, of Alaya, “the divine Soul of thought and compassion” of the trans-Himalayan mystics; of Plato’s “perpetually reasoning Divinity,” is the oldest of all the doctrines now known to, and believed in, by man. Therefore they cannot be said to have originated with Plato, nor with Pythagoras, nor with any of the philosophers within the historical period. Say the *Chaldæan Oracles*: “The works of nature co-exist with the intellectual [$\nu\omicron\epsilon\rho\omega$], spiritual Light of the Father. For it is the Soul [$\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$] which adorned the great heaven, and which adorns it after the Father.”

“The incorporeal world then was already completed, having its seat in the Divine Reason,” says Philo, who is erroneously accused of deriving his philosophy from Plato.

In the Theogony of Mochus, we find Æther first, and then the air; the two principles from which Ulom, the *intelligible* [$\nu\omicron\eta\tau\acute{o}s$] God (the visible universe of matter) is born.

In the Orphic hymns, the Eros-Phanes evolves from the Spiritual Egg, which the æthereal winds impregnate, wind being “the Spirit of God,” who is said to move in æther, “brooding over the Chaos”—the Divine “Idea.” In the Hindu *Kathopanishad*, Purusha, the Divine Spirit, stands before the original Matter; from their union springs the great Soul of the World, “Maha-Atma, Brahm, the Spirit of Life;” these latter appellations are identical with the Universal Soul, or Anima Mundi, and the Astral Light of the Theurgists and Kabalists.

Pythagoras brought his doctrines from the eastern sanctuaries, and Plato compiled them into a form more intelligible than the mysterious numerals of the Sage—whose doctrines he had fully embraced—to the uninitiated mind. Thus, the Kosmos is “the Son” with Plato, having for his father and mother the Divine Thought

and Matter. The “Primal Being” (*Beings*, with the Theosophists, as they are the collective aggregation of the divine Rays), is an emanation of the Demiurgic or Universal Mind which contains from eternity the idea of the “to be created world” within itself, which idea the unmanifested LOGOS produces of Itself. The first Idea “born in darkness before the creation of the world” remains in the unmanifested Mind; the second is this Idea going out as a reflection from the Mind (now the manifested LOGOS), becoming clothed with matter, and assuming an objective existence.

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